

BAR Meeting  
November 16, 2011

**ISSUE:** Addition and Alterations

**APPLICANT:** Eugene Smith & Laura Doyle by Rebecca Bostick

**LOCATION:** 804 South Lee Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

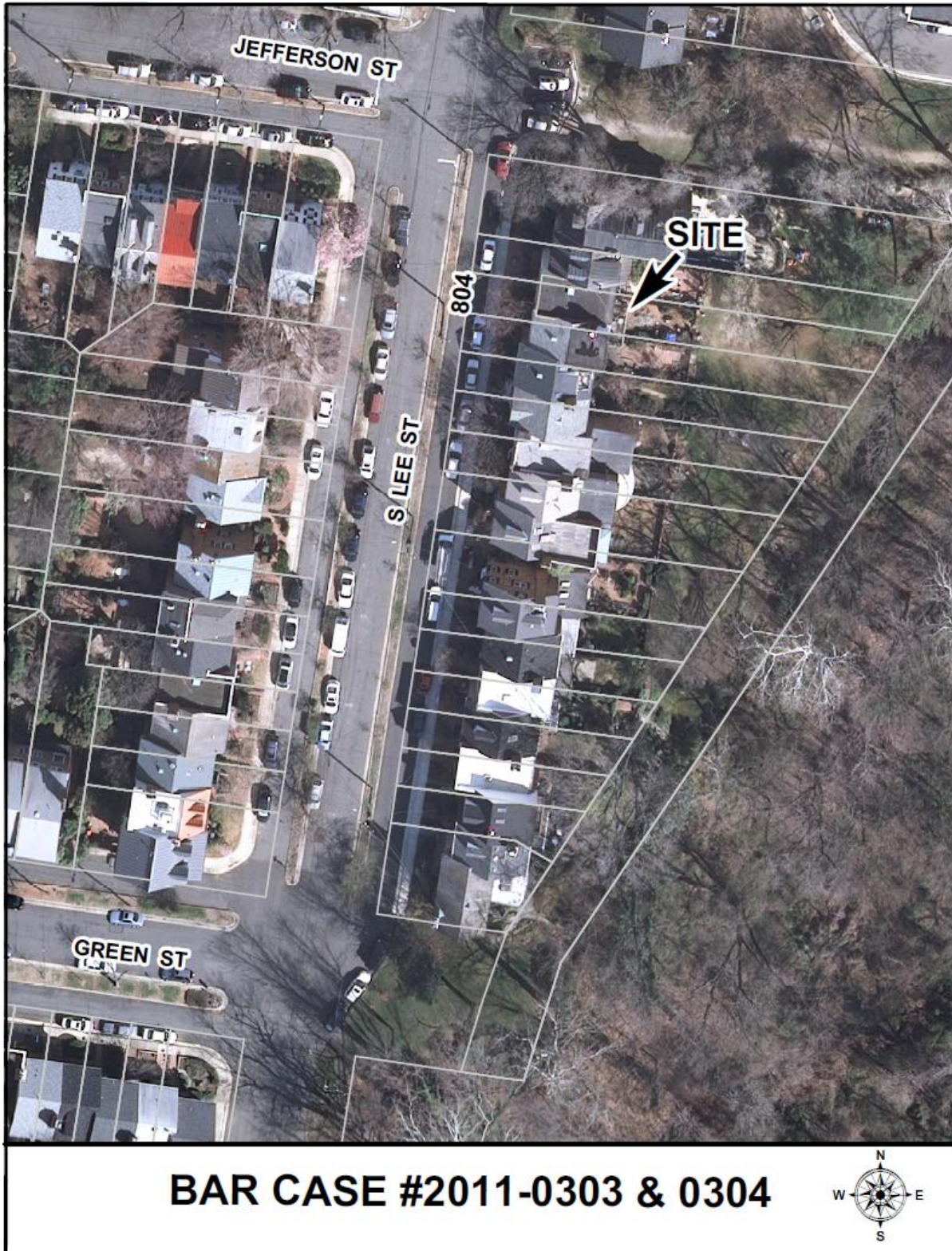
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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish and Certificate of Appropriateness, as per the revised plans stamped 10/26/2011 and with the condition that the below statements in R-1, 2, and 3 must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

- R-1 Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-746-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds in coordination with the contracting schedule.
- R-2 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-746-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
- R-3 The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

**\*\*EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of final approval if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

**\*\*BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including siding or roofing over 100 square feet, windows and signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-746-4200 for further information.



**Note:** Staff coupled the reports for BAR #2011-0303 (Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate) and BAR #2011-0304 (Certificate of Appropriateness) for clarity and brevity. This item requires a roll call vote.

## **I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations to the front elevation and the construction of a three-story, rear addition at 804 South Lee Street.

### **Demolition/Encapsulation**

The area of demolition/ encapsulation consists of the rear elevation wall surfaces of the basement, first, and second floors - an area of approximately 463 square feet.

### **Alterations to Front (West) Facade**

The existing 4/4 double-hung bay window will be replaced with a larger 12/12 double-hung bay window with a rowlock sill and copper standing seam metal roof. The existing 6/6 wood, double hung windows on the third floor will be replaced with Pella, 6/6, SDL 5/8" muntin, painted wood windows in conformance with the Board's *Window Policy*. A single-light 1'6" high transom will be installed over the existing front entry door and new metal handrail to match the existing will be added to the front stairs.

### **Rear Addition**

The applicant proposes to construct a frame, rear addition measuring approximately 17' wide by 20' long with an 8' deep wood deck extending from the first floor. The rear yard will be accessible from the deck by a metal spiral staircase. The rear, east elevation of the new addition will be a pair of full-light French doors on the ground and first floors flanked by single, double-hung windows. Additionally, the third floor of the addition will have a single, full-light French door flanked by single, double-hung windows. However, there are no changes proposed to the doors in the existing attic level dormer. The alterations on this level are limited to the rooftop deck on the new addition. Due to the close proximity of the additions to the property lines, the side elevations of the addition will have no fenestration.

The addition will be frame construction, clad in smooth 6" exposure Hardie Plank siding to differentiate it from the existing brick veneer townhouse. The proposed windows and doors are manufactured by Pella, with double-insulated, simulated divided lights with an interior spacer bar and 5/8" fixed muntins. The wood decks on the first, second and third floors will be detailed with stainless steel posts and cable railing system and the first floor wood deck will be supported by 10" square Permacast columns. The gutters and downspouts will be a prefinished aluminum.

## **II. HISTORY:**

The interior unit townhouse at 804 South Lee Street was constructed as part of the Yates Garden subdivision in ca. 1953. It is a three-bay, two-story brick townhouse with a partial raised basement in a row of eight townhouses with alternately projecting and set back facades. The west elevation is distinguished from its neighbors primarily by its slightly projecting frame bay window at the first level. The construction of these rowhouses was approved by the Board on March 12, 1953.

Staff could find no previous BAR approvals for 804 South Lee Street. However, there have been a several rear additions in this block of eight townhouses (800-814 S. Lee) since their construction in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, including:

800 South Lee Street	1989 (BAR 89-19)
810 South Lee Street	1980 (Bldg permit #0077)
812 South Lee Street	1987 (Bldg permit #2809)
814 South Lee Street	1992 (Bldg permit #9203015)

#### **IV. ANALYSIS:**

Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition/ encapsulation as proposed.

#### **Permit to Demolish**

In considering a Permit to Demolish, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

In the opinion of Staff, while this mid-20<sup>th</sup> century townhouse is a successful background building and compatible with nearby historic structures, it is without individual historical interest or uncommon architectural merit and none of the criteria for demolition and encapsulation are met and the Permit to Demolish should be granted.

#### **Addition**

The proposed addition and alterations comply with the zoning ordinance requirements. BAR staff does note that the zoning ordinance establishes only the absolute limitations and *minimum/maximum* standards and it is the Board's role to evaluate the addition in terms of scale, mass and compatibility.

Staff had a preliminary meeting with the applicant and the applicant's architect prior to the submission of the proposal. At that meeting, Staff recommended some design modifications which have been incorporated into the original submission. After submission, additional modifications were suggested, which included removing the deck extension on the third floor,



and adding additional trim above the first and second floor fenestrations. These changes are reflected in the elevation drawings provided in the BAR's packet dated 10/26/2011 and included on page 14 of this report.

Staff has no objection to a rear addition in this location. The rear yards at the north end of this block are deeper than most in the district and abut the large and heavily forested open space of Jones Point Park. Nevertheless, there is a concern that the proposed addition without the deck will increase the size of house by 60% (84% with the deck). The Board has previously expressed their preference for additions that represent no more than a 50% increase in the size of a house in order to ensure that the historic resource retains its primary visual importance. However, Staff is cognizant that the Board reviews each design approach individually and in some cases has approved compatible large additions to townhouses within the Old and Historic Alexandria District, including Yates Gardens when it had no adverse effect on nearby buildings of historic merit or the immediate neighbors.

While there is precedent for approving large rear additions on this block of South Lee Street, Staff believes that some of them were more successful than others. There are currently, rear additions on this block at 800, 810, 812 and 814 South Lee Street (see illustration below). The side/rear addition at 800 South Lee Street is the largest, as it is four-stories in height and five bays deep. This addition although appropriately scaled from the front elevation, is significantly large as viewed from the Jefferson ROW and the Federal Parkland. Staff does not believe this is a successful example of a side/rear addition onto a Yates Garden townhouse. 812 and 814 are a good comparison for the subject case as they each have a three-story addition, with 812 also fashioning an attic level dormer. Based on footprint measurements obtained in the City's GIS<sup>1</sup>, 812 and 814's additions are approximately 16 and 20 feet deep respectively, which is consistent with the applicant's 20 foot proposal (illustrated in red). Staff does feel that both of these additions are compatible and do not negatively impact the historic streetscape or existing development patterns.

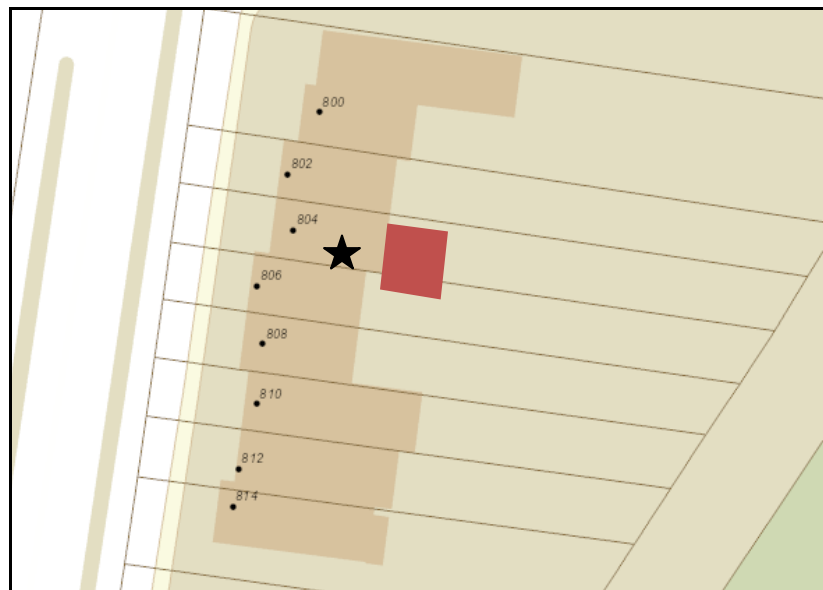


Illustration of Existing and Proposed Footprints

<sup>1</sup> GIS planimetric data is obtained through aerial photography and has an accuracy of +/- 2'.

Staff does acknowledge the proposed addition will have an impact on the applicant's flanking neighbors, as they currently do not have rear additions. Additionally, the proposed addition will be visible from the Jefferson Street ROW extension and the Federal parkland (Jones Point Park) located behind the subject lots. However with the natural vegetation and grade differentials, it will not be a dominant element in the landscape. Upon a recommendation of Staff, the applicant e-mailed the proposed drawings to all the neighbors along this blockface. To date, neither Staff nor the applicant has received any negative feedback regarding this application.

In the opinion of Staff, the proposed addition, while large, is appropriate and compatible with the existing two-story brick townhouse at 804 South Lee Street, consistent with the established development patterns on the blockface and conforms to the *Design Guidelines* for residential additions. The design of the rear addition is compatible in style, material and fenestration with the existing brick townhouse. The simplistic geometric form of the addition expresses the "prevailing shape" of the original building, as discussed in the *Guidelines*. The *Guidelines* also recommend that a new addition be differentiated from the existing building, and Staff believes the applicant has achieved this by incorporating modern detailing and materials into new addition, including Hardieplank siding, 1/1 windows and a post and cable railing system for the three-tier deck. While the addition introduces a new mass into the rear yard, it retains the integrity of the historic (c1953) portion of the house by maintaining the uniform massing of the blockface on South Lee Street, as recommend in the *Design Guidelines*.

Staff also commends the applicant for making appropriate alterations and changes to the front facade of the townhouse, namely the enlargement of the existing bay window, the placement of a transom above the door and the installation of an iron handrail on the entry stairs. These proposed new features are consistent with original architectural details found in the Yates Garden Development. These alterations and changes will be compatible with the historic resource's original design intent and sympathetic to its existing architectural character.

In summary, the proposed rear addition is appropriate and compatible with the historic townhouse in terms of mass, scale, height, and architectural expression, and does not negatively impact the integrity of this or nearby historic resources. Staff recommends approval, as submitted with the required condition from Alexandria Archaeology.

**STAFF:**

Michele Oaks, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

#### **IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

##### Code Administration:

- F-1 The review by Code Administration is a preliminary review only. Once the applicant has filed for a building permit, code requirements will be based upon the building permit plans. If there are any questions, the applicant may contact Thomas Sciulli, Plan Review Supervisor at [thomas.sciulli@alexandriava.gov](mailto:thomas.sciulli@alexandriava.gov) or 703-746-4190. (Code)
- C-1 Building and trades permits are required for this project. Five sets of *construction documents* sealed by a *Registered Design Professional* that fully detail the construction as well as layout and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems shall accompany the permit application(s)
- C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-5 All exterior walls shall comply with Table R302.1 of the 2009 USBC (2009 IRC as amended).

##### Alexandria Archaeology:

##### Findings:

- F-1 The Army Quartermaster's maps from the Civil War indicate that the lot at 804 South Lee Street is located on what was once the east rampart of Battery Rodgers, one of the fortifications used by the Union Army to control access up the Potomac River. Therefore, this property has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into Civil War military activities.
- F-2 Staff members from Alexandria Archaeology recently inspected the property and noted the presence of terracing in the backyard that mimics the location of the east rampart for Battery Rodgers.

##### Comments:

- R-1 Contact Alexandria Archaeology (703-746-4399) two weeks prior to any ground disturbing activity (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of The Zoning Ordinance) on this property. City archaeologists will provide on-site inspections to record significant finds in coordination with the contracting schedule.

- R-2 Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-746-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
- R-3 The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
- R-4 The above statements in R-1, 2, and 3 must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

**FINDINGS**

- F1. Building is shown out of the 100-yr regulatory floodplain on FEMA Maps dated June 16, 2011, and therefore not subject to the City of Alexandria's floodplain ordinance regulations. (T&ES)
- F2. Building (Parcel) is shown out of the Resource Protection Area (RPA) and therefore is not subject the City of Alexandria's RPA ordinance regulations. (T&ES)
- F3. An approved grading plan may be required at the time of building permit application per City Code Section 5-6-224 (d). Insufficient information has been provided to make that determination at this time. Questions regarding the processing of grading plans should be directed to the T&ES Site Plan Coordinator at (703) 746-4064. Memorandum to Industry No. 02-08 was issued on April 28, 2008 and can be viewed online via the following link. <http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/gradingPlanRequirements.pdf>

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R1. The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)
- R2. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 5-6-224 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
- R3. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R4. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)



- R5. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)
- R6. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)

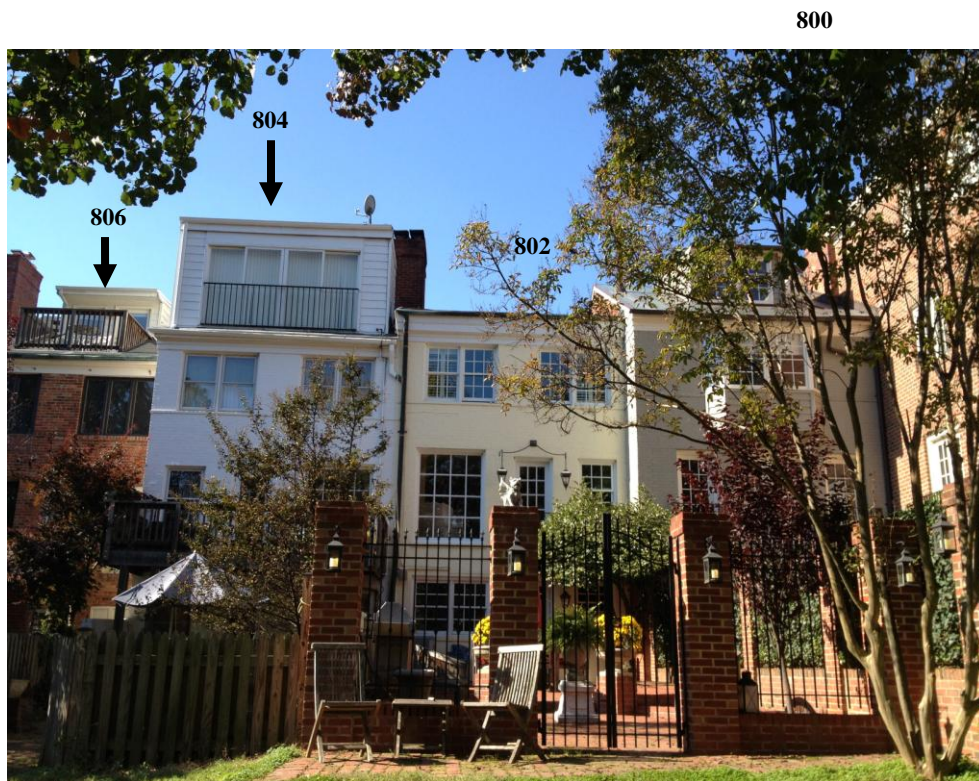
**CITY CODE REQUIREMENTS**

- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-3 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-4 Any work within or performed from the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)

**V. IMAGES**



**Figure 1: Existing Conditions – Front Elevations**



**Figure 2: Existing Conditions – Rear Elevations**





Figure 3: Existing Conditions – Rear Elevations

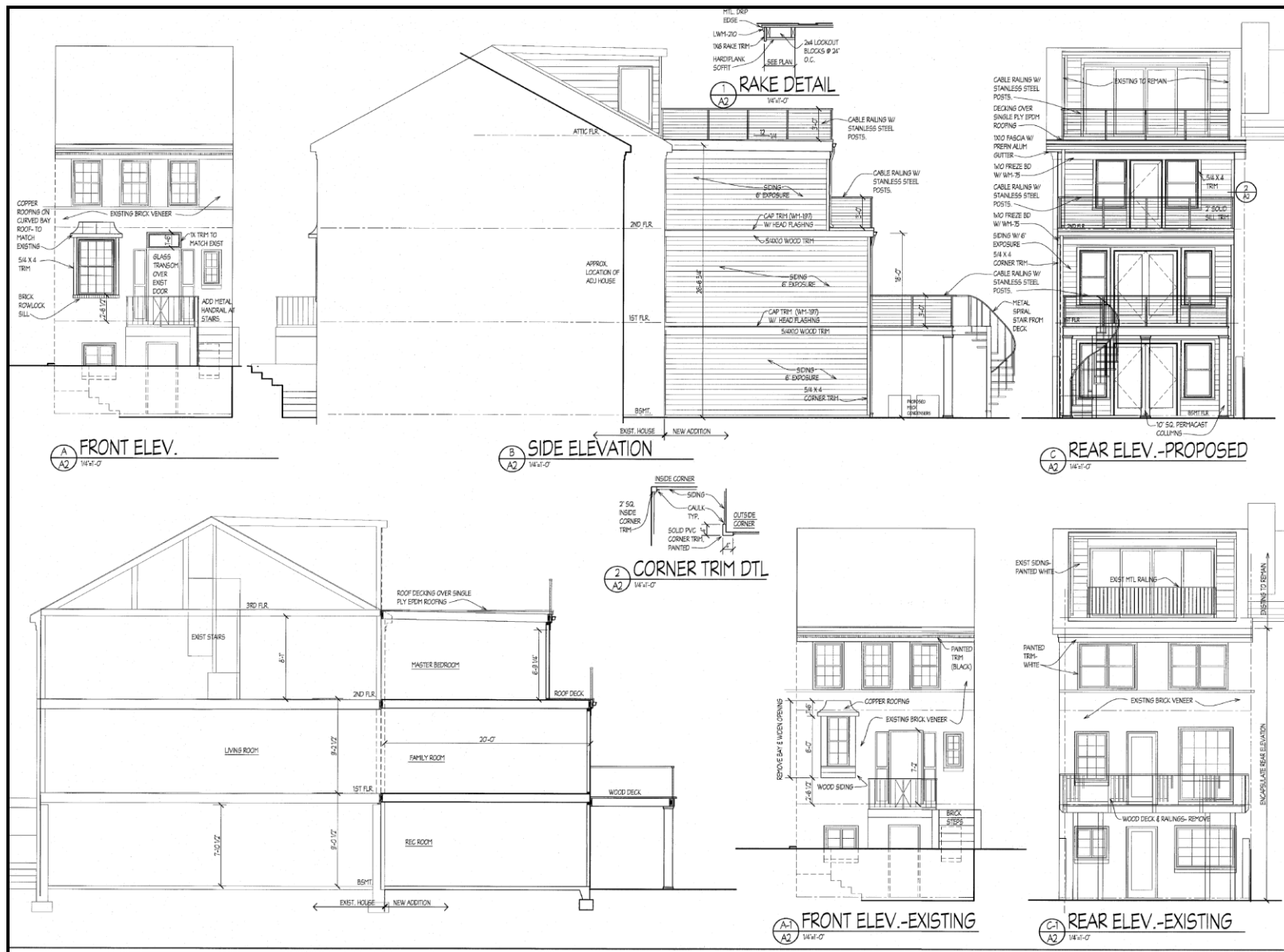


Figure 4: Existing Conditions – Rear Elevations of Adjacent Townhouses





Figure 5: Existing Conditions – Rear Elevations – Adjacent Townhouses



**Figure 6: Existing/ Proposed Elevations**